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28 Ap '26

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF

HORATIO W. BRINSMADE,

IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, TROY,

On Wednesday, July 28th, 1852,

BY

ROBERT B. VAN KLEECK, D. D.,

Rector of said Church.

"Wisdom is the grey hair, and an unspotted life old age."

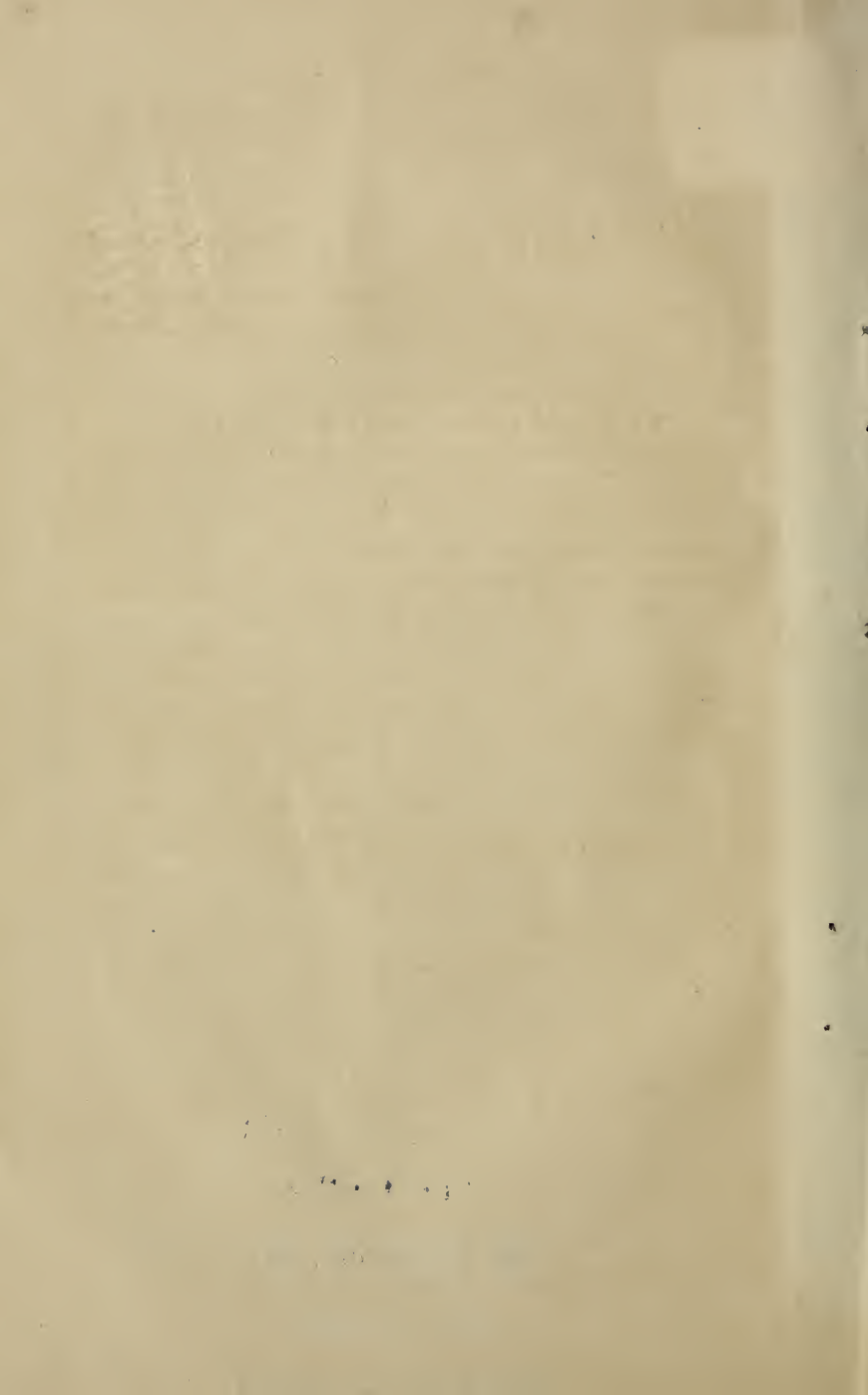
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Rev. R. B. VAN KLEECK, D. D.—

TROY, July 30th, 1852.

Dear Sir: The undersigned having listened with deep interest to your discourse on the death of our deceased friend HORATIO W. BRINSMADE, and feeling how appropriate your remarks were to the occasion, earnestly solicit a copy for publication.

It is seldom that we are reminded in a voice so emphatic, how uncertain is human life. The death of a young person is at any time peculiarly afflicting; but when one whose exemplary character, brilliant talents, ingenuous disposition, and noble qualities, had endeared him to us with almost fraternal ties, is stricken down, the blow is doubly severe. And while we feel deeply sensible how unavailing are human efforts to afford consolation under such circumstances, would, nevertheless, earnestly hope that you will comply with the wishes of a bereaved community, as expressed through

Your obedient servants,*

JNO. B. PIERSON,
E. WARREN PAINE,
C. R. CHURCH,
W. H. TILLINGHAST,
I. McCONIHE, JR.,
WM. E. HAGAN,
J. H. KNICKERBACKER,
WM. F. BURDEN.

* The bearers at his funeral.

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TROY, August 2d, 1852.

My Dear Sirs: I regret that I could not give a more prompt and favorable response to your gratifying request.

The address which you ask for publication was extemporaneous for the most part, having been delivered from short notes. It was a heartfelt tribute to our lamented friend, and it will give me great pleasure to meet your desire to do honor to his memory and to improve his death, if it is in my power.

I will employ my earliest leisure in endeavoring to write out the address, and if I can make it a meet memorial of departed worth, and a suitable response to your good desires to cherish his memory and to profit by his loss, I will place it at your disposal.

Meanwhile, with the sincere desire and prayer that *our* loss and *his* gain may be for the spiritual profit of many of his friends,

I am, with sincere regard,

Your friend,

R. B. VAN KLEECK.

TO MESSRS. JNO. B. PIERSON, E. WARREN PAINE, WM. H. TILLINGHAST, CHAS. R. CHURCH, WILLIAM E. HAGAN, I. MCCONNIE, JR., WM. A. BURDEN, J. H. KNICKERBACKER.

ADDRESS.

THERE are times, my friends, which task our faith to the utmost, and when our only refuge is in patient waiting and meek submission. It is so to-day. We have now to do, with Him, "whose way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters, while his footsteps are not known," and while our feeble faith in vain attempts to penetrate the "clouds and darkness which are round about Him," and to look into the sea of glass which is before the throne, where his judgments are made manifest, there comes to us a voice from the most excellent glory, "Be still, and know that I am God," for "what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." We bow our souls, in meek submission to the will of Heaven, and fain would say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

This hour is sacred to the claims of sorrow and of sympathy,—for deep sorrow fills our hearts, and our tenderest sympathies are stirred within us to their lowest depths while now “we weep with them that weep.” To human view alone, and reasoning as the world would judge, this crushing blow has nothing to relieve it, and this dark day is all sadness and all gloom. But in the goodness of God, and even to our weak faith, it is sweetly mingled with mercy, and full of precious consolation.

— There lies before us a young man, who was just entering upon life with high hopes and bright prospects—an only son, an only brother, cherished and doated on as few are loved—one who from childhood has been all that fond parental pride and love could wish, endowed by nature with fine powers of intellect, which were well cultivated and developed by diligent study, and a thorough education—one who through his college course maintained a character free from reproach, and was alike respected and beloved by his instructors and companions—one of warm affections, “tuned to finer issues,” formed for the highest, holiest sensibilities of love and friendship, and who was prized and cherished as a friend by many a noble and ingenuous youth

—one who was not only free from the vices to which his age and circumstances were exposed, but even from youthful follies, too—his tastes pure and elevated, his wishes moderate, his views true and just—he was conscientious, noble, high-minded, honorable, and as well fitted to adorn as to enjoy the life which God had given him.

He had chosen for his future course in life the medical profession, and had entered on its high pursuit with diligence and ardor. In one short year he had so commended himself to his instructors, and made such rapid progress and proficiency, as to give high hopes and good promise of success and usefulness. And here, in passing, let me say of this high and honorable calling, that it is second only in importance and in dignity, to the the sacred ministry of the Gospel and the church of Christ. It shares with us the best opportunities of seeing and knowing the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, in that “we are so fearfully and wonderfully made,” and in all the mystery of life and of death. It is brought with us into close, familiar, and endearing contact, with many and affecting scenes of sorrow, and of suffering, well calculated to draw out the finer feelings and tenderest sympathies of our common nature, and it is

called with us to tread with silent, solemn step,—

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Privileged beyond the common walks of virtuous life,
Quite on the verge of Heaven,”

and there may see, appreciate, and admire the power and consolations of religion in the weary hours of sickness, and on the bed of death.

If the poet said with truth—

“An undevout astronomer is mad,”

then how sad, how strange the anomaly of one well taught in all the laws and mysteries of human life, disease and death, and ever conversant with scenes of sorrow and of suffering, and with the need and power of Christian faith and hope, and yet careless, undevout, and unbelieving. Would to God that all the members of this honorable profession were not only skilful and beloved physicians of the body, but humble and devout believers in the truth and faith of Jesus Christ. They thus might be with us, our fellow workers and fellow helpers, unto the Gospel of God, and turn to good account that tender love and full implicit confidence, which is their recompense for kind and faithful services. By timely warnings of danger, which would be from them received and heeded, by opening up the way for us, and commending to

the sick the soothing and sustaining power of prayer, and judicious services and consolations, or by a word in season, of exhortation and of comfort, which would aid their treatment of the body, and elevate each member of the healing art to the high dignity and privilege of "a physician of the soul," they might do much, very much, to soothe the fainting heart, restore the failing flesh, give to the body health, and profit to the soul. Such a physician, had his life been spared, we have every reason to believe, our young friend would have been—adding to knowledge, judgment, and experience of mere human power, the skill and kindness of a tender sympathy and christian faith.

But soon and suddenly there was discovered that an insidious worm, at the root of this high health and manly form, had begun its fearful work, and a chilling blight, and dark and gathering shadows came over these bright prospects and these budding hopes. A short, but weary, illness of four months, of alternate fears and hopes, have weakened his strength in the way, have broken off his noble purposes, and our fond hopes, and here he lies, with only twenty summers o'er his head, and we are gathered in sorrow and sadness, for his early burial.

But it is our cheering comfort now to know that he had early, wisely made his choice, "that better part, which neither life nor death could take away, and that in his warm pursuit of useful knowledge, he neglected not that higher wisdom, whose beginning is the fear of God," and whose eternal issues are in the knowledge and the bliss of Heaven. He was early and decidedly religious. In him, the early grace, which God had given, was cherished and developed by careful training, earnest prayers, pious counsels and instructions, and a good example, in the genial, favored precincts of a happy christian home, crowned and rewarded by his own choice and diligence, and steadily progressive piety and grace. A strong, deep tone of religious principle, for one so young, remarkable—firm, stern, unmoveable—ran through all his purposes and hopes, his conduct and his course, and underlaid as with a strong foundation, the symmetry and firmness of his beautiful consistency. He was thus pure and beautiful in the loveliness of mere human virtue, and free from every youthful spot and stain. But this with him was not enough, nor did he make his early, steadfast virtue his boast or his dependence. He felt his need of a better righteousness, of a higher strength than

even his own, deep-rooted as it was, and beautiful and fruitful as it seemed already, in its strong purposes and budding hopes. He ascribed to early grace, his early piety and freedom from youthful vices and transgressions, he sought in the Gospel of God for pardon, renewal, grace, and strength to do his will. He was obedient, too, as well as humble. He early ratified his vows in confirmation, and coming to the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ, "he was not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." In this holy fellowship he steadfastly continued, regularly and devoutly coming to this holy ordinance, thus professing openly his penitence and faith, and seeking new supplies of grace and strength, to do and suffer all the will of God. He *here* received it for the last time on Easter day; and some of you remember how with meek penitence and patience, but with failing strength, he at this altar knelt, his pale, sweet countenance illumined with a steadfast faith and an undying hope. Sweet day for such a service, and for such a place in the heart's calendar of soothing memories, and sweet, sustaining

hopes of "Jesus and the resurrection." On the last Tuesday he again received it on his couch of weary sickness, which soon proved his bed of death, surrounded by the loved ones of his heart, and now the stricken, yet soothed and trusting mourners at his early bier. Of that sweet scene, so calm, and solemn, and affecting, I need not, should not speak ; for it was holy ground, and its hallowed memory is treasured up in the heart, and in Heaven. His whole sickness was marked by a serious devotion ; books of religious devotion were his choice and his company, and thus his weary days and nights flowed smoothly on, soothed and relieved by fond affection and by heavenly truths and hopes, while he in all was calm, patient, strong, steadfast, hopeful, cheerful, until death kindly brought relief, and as we marked the righteous, radiant pathway of his setting sun, we saw and felt "that his end was peace."

We have in his short life and early death, a warning and example to the young. You see to-day, my young friends, that youth, health, and strength are no shield against the shafts of the destroyer. That dear, but now lifeless form, was young, active, strong, buoyant in health and hope, with no constitutional predisposition to disease,

and no long warning of a premature decay. But the fell destroyer came, and sapping the sources of his life, and insidiously undermining the firm foundation of his health and hopes, has taken down his manly tabernacle, now ready for the dust of death. It is but one short year since he left with signal credit and high hopes, the loved and honored shades of his alma mater, having completed his college course, and received her honors and her blessing. Since that time, four others of his class (it was a noble class, a band of brothers true and strong in mind and heart), have been removed by death. He hoped *to-morrow* to have visited again those venerable shades, and mingled with the scenes and loved ones of his college life ; but when to-morrow dawns, he will be sleeping in his sepulchre, and the deep sigh and sorrowing dirge, will from his class, and college, mourn his absence and his loss.

Now, what security have you, my friends, for health and longer life, which he had not a year ago ? It would seem as if the Providence of God was kindly, loudly calling on the young, to think of death and to prepare to meet him. In the last month, three members of this congregation have been called away, all under thirty years of age,

and each of them with something solemn and affecting in their early death. How do these many and affecting calls sound in your ears and hearts, the needful warning words, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them." These evil days may come to you in weary sickness and in early death, when *you* shall go to your long home, and the mourners go about the streets; "when the silver cord shall be loosed and the golden bowl be broken, the pitcher shall be broken at the fountain and the wheel be broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." How does a scene like this give new, affecting force to these familiar but solemn words, and how do they commend the early wisdom and prudent forecast, which in life's brightest morning, remember the dark night of death, and in early piety and cherished grace, make full provision for a longer life, or for an early summons to the grave and to eternity. You have here a bright example of this prudent wisdom and this early grace. Study it with earnest contemplation, follow it with warm desires, and diligent and firm resolve. And need I say,

how such a scene as this, and such a life, and such a death, proclaim through all the devious paths of youthful folly and temptation, that warning voice of God, “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk after the ways of thy heart and the sight of thine eyes, but *know thou* that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” Yes, God will bring thee *into judgment*, though thy heart rejoice in evil ways, and thine eyes blinded, see no danger in thy wayward path. The book of God records, and his judgment will reveal and recompense thy carnal mirth, thine idle words, thy wicked jests, thy fearful oaths, thy deadly cups, for “it is appointed unto all men, and for *you*, too, once *to die*, and after this the judgment.”

Let me beseech you then, here, in the house of God, while your ingenuous hearts are moved by such a scene as this—*here*, over the remains of one you loved and honored for his manly virtues, to resolve that if temptation shall assail your hearts, or lure your feet astray, you will resist it in the strength of God; “that you will avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away,” remembering that life is short, that death is near, and judgment sure, that a good conscience is a continual feast,

“and that wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

To him whom we now mourn, religion was the one thing needful, the foundation of his hopes, the pole star of his life, his stay and strength in weary sickness, and his support and consolation in the hour of death. Seek it then earnestly and now, with all your heart and soul, as you would like him desire to live, and as with him you would be ready and prepared to die. It may be that his early and lamented death may do more good than could his useful life prolonged, in stirring up good desires, and giving a new impulse to hidden springs of purposes and conduct, whose course and issues never will be known, but in the light of the judgment and eternity. So let it be, thou wise and chastening God, “who bringest light out of darkness,” and “who doest all things well.”

We have here, too, a signal instance of the power of grace, to break the charm and tender ties of life, and to sustain and strengthen even the young, at the approach and in the hour of death. What less than grace divine could have made him so resigned to part with life, and to meet death so calmly? He had much to live for : friends, many, fond and kind, and prospects bright and flattering,

were spread out before him, of usefulness, success and happiness in life ; but all these, at the call of God, though not without a struggle, he quietly gave up. And when at length death came, he was not taken by surprise ; but on his being told that he was sinking rapidly, he calmly said, “ I have anticipated it, and am prepared to meet it.” To the loved ones round his dying couch he said, “ Weep not for me,” and in quietness and confidence rallied his failing strength for the last conflict and the final hour. When at the still hour of midnight there was heard the cry, “ Behold the bridegroom cometh,” he asked for prayers, to trim his lamp with dying grace ; and when at that sad hour I stood beside his calm, quiet bed of death, it was a privilege to be desired, and long remembered, to cheer with words of truth and hope, and to commend in prayer to God, his patient, trusting soul, just ready for its passage. He had asked to have responsively repeated for his comfort, that song of peace and triumph for the christian pilgrim, the 23d Psalm ; and dwelt himself with trembling voice, but earnest faith and solemn emphasis, upon those cheering words, “ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort

me." Taking up from me, the soothing and sustaining words, he calmly said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And when asked if he found any thing terrible in death, he sweetly answered, *only the physical suffering*, which told its sting was gone, its bitterness was past ; and then he added in a trembling tone of solemn tenderness—

" 'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die."

In these words he uttered a high truth, and by it, "He being dead yet speaketh," for this short span is not the whole of life, which stretches far beyond the grave and time, and through eternity, and death is but the entrance on its issues, either of joy or woe forever and forever ! With words and hopes like these, calm and serene, he passed the vale of death ; strong, patient, cheerful, trustful, until he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, "and came off more than conqueror through him that loved him."

And now why weep we so, above his early bier ? We asked life for him earnestly of God, with oft-repeated prayers and flowing tears, and yet in meek submission to his will, and can we now complain that God has "given him *life*, even length of days for ever and ever." Is not the life immortal and eternal, on the employments and the joys of which

he has the earlier entered, better far than any life on earth, however long, honored, happy, or useful? His prospects here indeed were fair and bright; but what were they to the brighter prospects of eternity and immortality? His powers of intellect were high and full of promise, in their training here, for useful exercise and full development; but these powers now ennobled, purified, and raised above the mists of earth and sin, have entered upon the better training of the Father of lights, and may range at large in the higher knowledge of the invisible and the eternal. He had chosen for his life, a high profession and an honored calling; yet we know that its most honored and successful course, is full of care and toil, oft thankless, unappreciated, unrequited, save by a good conscience and approving heaven. He has been spared this care and toil, and earlier brought to study and to know the full remedial power of "the Balm in Gilead and the good physician there," to eat the fruit of the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and to breathe freely and to walk at large, strong in immortal youth, in that better, brighter land, "where the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick, for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." His home affec-

tions too, were warm and strong, true as the needle to the pole in filial duty and fraternal love, so that in his loved home he ever found his highest happiness, and in a parent's smile, a sister's love, his earthly paradise and rest. But those affections now are purified and strengthened, and transferred from earth, to his new home eternal in the heavens, the mansion in his Father's house above, where one by one, he waits to welcome the loved ones of his cherished home on earth, when they shall meet to part no more, "a happy family in heaven."

The love of music in his life was strong ; and his deep, clear voice, was often raised in welcome strains, and turned to good account to gratify his friends, and to maintain and aid the higher praises of the sanctuary. When he drew near to death, he spoke of music which he heard, inaudible to those around, and with his trembling voice and failing flesh, he strove to reach the unearthly strain. It may be that the song of the Seraphim, or the high praises of the redeemed, were then wafted to his ears, to raise and cheer his sinking heart, or it may have been the mingling voices of the holy angels waiting round his dying bed, "to carry his departing spirit into Abraham's bosom." In any, either view, it was a meet, sweet closing of

a life like his, and a soothing, cheering earnest, of the part which he was soon to take, in the praises of the upper sanctuary, and the new song to God and the Lamb forever. While the last words, which trembled on his dying lips, "my heavenly Father," were sweet, and cheering too. They seemed to speak of filial piety and filial love, which looked beyond the earthly to the heavenly, as if he strove to say, "My heavenly Father," thou hast loved and blessed me all my days ; thy grace has guided and thy hand has saved ; my youthful heart, and hopes, and trust, and love, have been in thee, "my heavenly Father ;" and now thou callest, and I come to thee, child of thy care and love, lamb of thy blood-bought flock ; receive my soul, which thou hast made, redeemed and saved ; sustain and strengthen still my patient, trusting, trembling spirit ; keep far my foes, give peace, and bring me to my heavenly home.

There is here full and precious comfort for his sorrowing friends. That home which he so loved in life will now indeed be sad and desolate, but ever cheered by the sweet, soothing memory of his calm presence, his meek devotion, his voice of music, his heart of love, his happy life, his peaceful death. Seldom, if ever, have we seen anything

so beautiful, so touching, so affecting, so consoling, so animating, so full of the finer feelings of earth, and of the higher, holier thoughts and hopes of heaven, as we were called to witness in his chamber of sickness, and by his bed of death. Then "let us lift our hearts unto the Lord," and raise our weeping eyes and trembling hopes where he has gone before ; for we may not doubt that his happy spirit has "ascended to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God." There let our hearts and hopes ascend. Faith points the mourner's eye to brighter worlds, and leads the way. Hope stays the sinking heart, on God and heaven ; while Patience has her perfect work, in chastened sorrow and submissive love.

"Patience accomplish thy labor, accomplish thy work of affection.

"Sorrow and Silence are strong, and patient endurance is godlike.

"Therefore accomplish thy labor of love till the heart be made godlike ;

"Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered more worthy of heaven."

And now why tarry we ? Fain would we linger here, within these consecrated walls, where his "due feet loved to tread," and where he knelt so often, in meek and rapt devotion. Fain would we prolong this sad, sweet hour of sorrow and of hope, the quiet, soothing strains of comfort and of truth, and the last mournful words of the dirge and the burial. But on we must, with stricken

hearts and trusting hopes ,slowly and sadly, on our weary way to the shade and the rest of the sepulchre.

Come forth, my young friends, now healthy and strong, and do your sad work for the loved and the lost. Ye bear a precious burden, a freighted treasure of fond hopes and tender love, but late erect, and hopeful, and bright, and beloved. Ye bear a precious treasure, bought by the blood of Jesus, and ransomed for the resurrection and for immortality. Then bear him sadly, slowly, from this house of God, to his lone, quiet resting-place, and by the way think of his many virtues and his early piety, of his exemplary life and peaceful death. Think of your own health and strength, so frail and ready to fall ; of your own life, so uncertain and vain ; and of your own death, *so sure*, and it may be *so near*. And while you heave the secret sigh, think also and often, of your own need of that Savior, who is mighty to save, and of that Christian faith and hope which sustained our loved friend, and which alone can give you peace in death, a joyful resurrection, and a glorious immortality.

It may help you to realize and bring home these truths so affecting and needful, if we give you a

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dirge, solemn and beautiful, which he wrote for a loved classmate, to be sung at his grave. Let us take up the strain, use his own words to honor him in death, whom we so loved in life, and thus sweetly sing his peaceful requiem :

With reverent voice, Almighty God,
We raise our mournful dirge,
While sunk beneath thy chastening rod,
And death's relentless scourge.

A comrade loved, has left us now ;
Close, brothers, round his bier ;
Death's sable wing doth shade our brow,
Affection draws the tear.

The choicest wreaths fond hope could twine,
Lie mingled with the clay ;
But still a brighter hope doth shine,
And heavenward lights the way.

Then sleep, thou silent slumberer, sleep,
Till the last trump shall sound ;
May God in heaven, thy spirit keep,
Where endless joys are found.